

The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

NIC No. 01408-84
2 March 1984

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM: [REDACTED] 25X1
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for Western Europe
SUBJECT: Meeting with EURA and OGI Analysts to Discuss Trial of Papal Assassination Attempt

1. On 2 March, I met with DDI analysts [REDACTED] 25X1 to discuss the status of the Italian case against Bulgarian, Sergey Antonov, accused by Mehmet Ali Agca of aiding him in attempting to kill the Pope. The following summarizes the principal points discussed. OGI's next issue of the Terrorism Review will cover much of this topic in greater detail.

2. Pending Decisions. Two major decisions are yet to be made by Italian authorities:

- First, whether Antonov, presently under house arrest, should be returned to jail. The chief magistrate--while reading the massive legal brief on the case--recommended that he be returned to jail in January, but the time has elapsed for a decision to be made concerning his appeal and he still remains under house arrest.
- Second, whether a formal indictment will be handed down. Only the magistrates and the Interior Minister have access to the 50,000-page legal document that lays out the evidence against Antonov; it has been almost a year and a half since he has been apprehended, and still there is wrangling within the Italian bureaucracy over whether a strong case can be made against him.

3. The Evidence. Many Italian officials apparently do not believe there is anything beyond the Agca testimony linking Antonov directly to the Papal assassination plot. CIA analysts do not know what is in the brief, whether it contains more than circumstantial

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evidence.

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Most of the evidence that has come to light so far is circumstantial, showing connections between Agca and Bulgarian intelligence services dating back to the 1970s, and perhaps showing Antonov's dealings with Agca on subjects not directly bearing on the Pope's shooting.

4. Italian Politics. The snail's pace of the investigation is partly attributable to the slow Italian legal system and the internecine conflicts within the Italian bureaucracy. The Italian magistrates dealing with the case want to bring it to trial, believing that not to do so would sully the legal system's image. Magistrate Martella apparently intends to press the case, to the chagrin of Foreign Ministry officials who would like to see the case dropped so that bilateral relations with Bulgaria could get back on a normal footing. Recently, Sofia and Rome have announced that they are naming new ambassadors

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and the Foreign Ministry is also interested in an exchange of two Italians in Bulgarian jails, accused of spying.

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Agca's credibility has also been questioned because of slander charges lodged against him for his statements against Antonov on alleged assassination attempts against Lech Walesa.

5. Likely Outcome. Analysts believe that there will probably be a trial, although not as soon as some sources are suggesting. However, it is by no means clear that the trial of Antonov will be focused on his connection with the Papal assassination attempt, because of the possible lack of evidence. However, the Italians might be able to convict Antonov of espionage--for which there is good evidence of his activities as a military intelligence officer. This route could raise some tricky questions about the extent of East European espionage within Italy and the operation of Italian security services. A good indication of how fast the Italians might move on the indictment would be when and whether they move to place Antonov back in jail.

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